

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A license management apparatus for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from service offer means to service use means, the license management apparatus comprising:

10 license management means for managing the license;

license acquisition request receiving means for receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer means; and

15 license sending means for sending the license to said service offer means in response to the acquisition request for the license.

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2. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising license counting means for counting a value associated with the license.

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3. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said license counting means counts the value when the license is acquired from authentication means that issues the license.

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4. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said license counting means counts the value when the license is sent to said service offer means in response to the acquisition request for the license.

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5. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

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6. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said license management means manages the license and the license identifier that identifies the license by relating to each other.

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7. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising license identifier acquisition request receiving means for receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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8. The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising license identifier sending means for sending the license identifier to a requesting means in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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9. A service offer apparatus comprising service offer means for providing a service to service use means, wherein said service offer means comprises:

license acquisition request sending means for
5 sending an acquisition request for the license
associated with the service to license managing means
for managing the license; and

license receiving means for receiving the
license from said license management means.

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10. The service offer apparatus as claimed in
15 claim 9, wherein the acquisition request for the license
contains a license identifier that identifies the
license.

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11. The service offer apparatus as claimed in
claim 9, further comprising license sending means for
sending the license acquired from said license
25 management means to said license management means.

12.. A license management method for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from service offer means to service use means, the license management method comprising:

5 a license management step of managing the license;

 a license acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer means; and

10 a license sending step of sending the license to said service offer means in response to the acquisition request for the license.

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13. The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license counting step of counting a value associated with the license.

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14. The license management method as claimed
25 in claim 13, wherein, in said license counting step, the

value associated with the license is counted when the license is acquired from authentication means that issues the license.

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15. The license management method as claimed in claim 13, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is sent to said service offer means in response to the acquisition request for the license.

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16. The license management method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

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17. The license management method as claimed in claim 12, wherein, in said license management step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

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18. The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license identifier acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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19. The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license identifier sending step of sending the license identifier to a requesting means in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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20. A service offer method for providing a service from service offer means to service use means, comprising:

5 a license acquisition request sending step of sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to license managing means that manages the license; and

a license receiving step of receiving the license from said license management means.

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21. The service offer method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

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22. The service offer method as claimed in claim 20, further comprising a license sending step of sending the license acquired from said license management means to said license management means.

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23. . A license management program for causing
a computer to perform a license management method for
managing a license associated with a service that is
provided from service offer means to service use means,

5 the license management method comprising:

a license management step of managing the
license;

a license acquisition request receiving step
of receiving an acquisition request for the license from
10 said service offer means; and

a license sending step of sending the license
to said service offer means in response to the
acquisition request for the license.

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24. The license management program as claimed
in claim 23, wherein the license management method
20 further comprises a license counting step of counting a
value associated with the license.

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25. The license management program as claimed
in claim 24, wherein, in said license counting step, the
value associated with the license is counted when the
license is acquired from authentication means that
5 issues the license.

10 26. The license management program as claimed
in claim 23, wherein, in said license counting step, the
value associated with the license is counted when the
license is sent to said service offer means in response
to the acquisition request for the license..

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27. The license management program as claimed
20 in claim 12, wherein the acquisition request for the
license includes a license identifier that identifies
the license.

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28. The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein, in said license management step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

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29. The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein the license management method further comprises a license identifier acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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30. The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein the license management program further comprises a license identifier sending step of sending the license identifier to a requesting means in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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31. A service offer program for causing a computer to perform a service offer method for providing a service from service offer means to service use means, comprising:

- 5 a license acquisition request sending step of sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to license managing means that manages the license; and
- a license receiving step of receiving the
- 10 license from said license management means.

- 15 32. The service offer program as claimed in claim 31, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

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33. The service offer program as claimed in claim 31, wherein the service offer method further
- 25 comprises a license sending step of sending the license

acquired from said license management means to said
license management means.

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34. A computer-readable recording medium
storing a license management program for causing a
computer to perform a license management method for
10 managing a license associated with a service that is
provided from service offer means to service use means,
the license management method comprising:

a license management step of managing the
license;

15 a license acquisition request receiving step
of receiving an acquisition request for the license from
said service offer means; and

a license sending step of sending the license
to said service offer means in response to the
20 acquisition request for the license.

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35. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management method further comprises a license counting step of counting a value associated with the license.

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36. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 35, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is acquired from authentication means that issues the license.

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37. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is sent to said service offer means in response to the acquisition request for the license.

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38. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

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39. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein, in said license management
10 step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

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40. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management method further comprises a license identifier
20 acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

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41. The computer-readable recording medium as
claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management
program further comprises a license identifier sending
step of sending the license identifier to a requesting
5 means in response to the acquisition request for the
license identifier that identifies the license.

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42. A computer-readable recording medium
storing a service offer program for causing a computer
to perform a service offer method for providing a
service from service offer means to service use means,
15 comprising:
a license acquisition request sending step of
sending an acquisition request for the license
associated with the service to license managing means
that manages the license; and
20 a license receiving step of receiving the
license from said license management means.

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43. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 42, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

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44. The computer-readable recording medium as
10 claimed in claim 42, wherein the service offer method further comprises a license sending step of sending the license acquired from said license management means to said license management means.

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